

Message Text

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E.O. 11652 XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, US, CE

SUBJ: ALLEGATIONS RE CIA ACTIVITIES

REF: (A) COLOMBO 1289, MAY 9, 1974; (B) COLOMBO 740

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER RAISED ILANGARATNE'S CIA ALLEGATIONS WITH ME MARCH 28, EXPLAINING SHE HAD DISCUSSED MY LETER (REFTEL B) WITH HIM AND HAD CAUTIONED HIM AGAINST MAKING UNSUBSTANTIATED CHARGES AGAINST UNITED STATES. DESPITE PERIODIC RUMORS OF BOTH CIA AND KGB INVOLVEMENT IN SRI LANKA, GOVERNMENT HAD NO SPECIFIC PROOF OF THEIR ACTIVITIES AND CONSEQUENTLY ILANGARATNE'S STATEMENTS WERE UNHELPFUL. SHE SAID ILANGARATNE AND CERTAIN OTHER MEMBERS WERE BECOMING "PANICKY" AS RESULT OF PRESSURE BY OPPOSITION LEADER J.R. JAYEWARDENE TO HOLD ELECTIONS THIS YEAR. SHE AGREED TO MY SUGGESTION THAT IF ANY TYPE OF SUSPICIONS RE CIA AROSE WHE WOULD EITHER GET IN TOUCH WITH ME DIRECTLY OR ASK THAT I TALK WITH MINISTER WHOSE SUSPICIONS HAD BEEN AROUSED.END SUMMARY.

2. DURING MY MARCH 28 DISCUSSION WITH PRIME MINISTER (OTHER SUBJECTS SEPTELS), SHE RAISED MY MARCH 10 LETTER TO HER RE ALLEGATIONS FORETN AND INTEIRAL TRADE MINISTER ILANGARATNE HAD MADE ABOUT CIA ACTIVITIES IN SRI LANKA. SHE SAID THAT SHE HAD TAKEN LETTER TO
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NEXT CABINET MEETING AND HAD PLANNED TO BRING UP SUB-

JECT BUT MEETING WAS PROLONGTY AND APPROPRIAE OPPORTUNITY DID NOT ARISE. HOWEVER, AFTER I HAD CONTACTED HER PRIVATE SECRETARY (M.D.D. PIERIS) FOLLOWING ILANGARATNE'S SECOND PUBLIC-LEGATION, SHE HAD TELEPHONED ILANGARATNE AND HAD DISCUSSED HIS CIA CHARGES AS WELL AS ILANGARATNE'S STATEMENT ELECTIONS MIGHT NOT BE HELD IN 1977.

3. PRIME MINISTER SAID SHE HAD RECALLED TO ILANGARANTE THAT NUMBEROF ALLEGATIONS OF FOREIGN INVOLVMENT HAD ARISEN AT TIME OF 1971 INSURGENCY. HOWEVER, GSL HAD BEEN UNABLE DEFINITELY TO PROVE ANY CASE OF FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT ALTHOUGH HEAVY SUSPICION CAUSED GSL TO ASK WITHDRAWAL OF NORTH KOREAN EMBASSY. DESPITE VARIOUS RUMORS OF BOTH CIA AND KGB ACTIVITIES, ILANGARATNE SEED TO BE BASING HIS CHARGES ON UNSUBSTANTIATED RUMORS BUT, BY AIRING THESE SUSPICIONS PUBLICLY, HE RISKED JEOPARDIZING SRI LANKA'S GOOD RELATIONS WITH UNITED STATES. SHE WENT ON TO REMIND ILANGARATNE USG HAD JUST SIGNED 100,000-TON PL 480 AGREEMENT AND THAT GSL HOPED TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL HELP FROM USG. IT THEREFORE WAS HARDLY WISE FOR ILANGARATNE TO MAKE CHARGES ON BASIS VAGUE SUSPICIONS.

4. PM SAID SHE ALSO TOLD ILANARANTE HE SHOULD NOT SUGGEST THAT GSL DID NOT PLAN TO HOLD ELECTIONS IN 1977. THERE WAS CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR PARLIMENT TO BE DISSOLVED AND ELECTIONS HELD IN 1977 AND SHE HERSELF HAD PUBLICLY CONFIRMED HER GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS TO HOLD ELECTIONS IN 1977. ILANGARATNE SUGGESTION TO CONTRARY WAS NOT ONLY INCONSISTENT WITH THIS POLICY BUT STRENGTHENED HAND OF OPPOSITION GROUPS WHICH COULD ARGUE THAT THEY NEEDED TO STEP UP THEIR AGITATION AGAINST GOVERNMENT TO PREVENT ITS CLINGING TO POWER. PRIME MINISTER SAID ILANGARATNE INDICATED HE WOULD ACCEDE TO HER REQUEST REGARDING BOTH CIA AND 1977 ELECTIONS BUT, WITH REGARD CIA, NOTED PRESIDENT FORD HAD ORDERED INVESTIGATION OF CIA AND CONSEQUENTLY HE SAW NO HARM

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IN VOICING SUSPICIONS ABOUT ITS ACTIVITIES.

5. I TOLD PRIME MINISTER THAT PROTEST LETTER TO HER WAS PROMPTED BY SEVERAL CONCERNS. THIS WAS FIRST INSTANCE IN RECENT YEARS PT WHICH SLFP MINISTER HAD MADE SUCH CHARGES. SECONDLY, I WAS CONCERNED THAT ADDITIONAL UNFOUNDED CHARGES MIGHT BE MADE OF OPPOSITION LEADER J.R. JAYEWARDENE CONTINUED TO PRESS

GTFT FOR ELECTIONS THIS YEAR. THIRDLY, I ANTICIPATED THAT THERE WOULD BE INCREASING NUMBER OF NEWS ARTICLES FROM WASHINGTON AS CIA INVESTIGATION PROCEEDED AND THESE WERE LIKELY TO STIMULATE MORE ALLEGATIONS HERE.

6. I WENT ON TO SAY THAT ALTHOUGH IT SEEMED TOTALLY UNNECESSARY I NONETHELESS WANTED CATEGORICALLY TO DENY THAT CIA WAS IN ANY WAY INVOLVED IN EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 1959 (PRIME MINISTER S.W.R.D. BANDARANAIKE'S ASSASSINATION), OR IN THE APRIL 1971 INSURGENCY WHEN, AS SHE WELL KNEW, WE RESPONDED PROMPTLY TO GSL'S REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE. AND AS I HAD TOLD HER LAST YEAR (REFTEL A), I HAD AGAIN WANTED HER TO KNOW THAT WE WERE NOT IN ANY WAY SUPPORTING J.R. JAYEWARDENE OR OPPOSITION UNITED NATIONAL PARTY BUT RATHER MAINTAINED GOOD GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS WITH HER GOVERNMENT. AT SAME TIME, AS I HAD ALSO TOLD HER LAST YEAR, WE PLANNED TO MAINTAIN NORMAL CONTACTS WITH OPPOSITION ELEMENTS AS PARTY OF EMBASSY'S LEGITIMATE FUNCTION OF KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH ALL ELEMENTS IN POLITICAL SPECTRUM.

7. PRIME MINISTER EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR MY ASSURANCES AND UNDERSTAND THAT EMBASSY'S ROLE RE OPPOSITION POLITICAL ELEMENTS. IN HER OPINION CIA ISSUE HAD ARISEN BECAUSE SOME MINISTERS WERE "PANICK" BECAUSE OF OPPOSITION LEADER JAYEWARDENE'S DEMANDS FOR ELECTIONS THIS YEAR. SHE HAD HAD RECENT CONVERSATION WITH JAYEWARDENE AND HAD EXPLAINED TO HIM THAT, WHILE SHE HAD BANNED LEFTISTS' PARAMILITARY UNITS LAST DECEMBER, JAYEWARDENE WAS MAKING MEMBERS OF UNITED FRONT COALITION NERVOUS BY TRYING TO MOBILIZE PUBLIC SUPPORT IN FAVOR OF ELECTIONS.

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TIONS THIS YEAR DESPITE REGULATION WHICH PROHIBITED QUESTIONING OF 1972 CONSTITUTION (WHICH CALLS FOR ELECTIONS IN 1977). SHE HAD WARNED HIM AGAINST CONSEQUENCES OF THIS AGITATION AND HAD ASKED THAT HE TAKE ACCOUNT OF ITS IMPACT ON WELFARE OF COUNTRY. JAYEWARDENE HAD NOT GIVEN SPECIFIC UNDERTAKING TO CALL OFF PRESSURE FOR 1975 ELECTIONS BUT SHE HOPED HE WOULD NOT TRY TO PUSH UNITED FRONT TOO HARD.

8. AT CONCLUSION THIS PORTION OF CONVERSATION, I TOLD PRIME MINISTER THAT CIA ISSUE UNDOUBTEDLY WOULD COME UP IN FUTURE FOR REASONS I HAD INDICATED. IF SERIOUS ISSUES OR SUSPICIONS DID ARISE, I HOPED SHE WOULD EITHER DISCUSS THEM DIRECTLY WITH ME

IN FIRST INSTANCE OR, IF SHE PREFERRED, I WOULD BE
PREPARED TO DISCUSS ALLEGATIONS WITH ANY MINISTER
WHO HARBORED SUSPICIONS. SHE AGREED TO THIS SUGGESTION.
VAN HOLLEN

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